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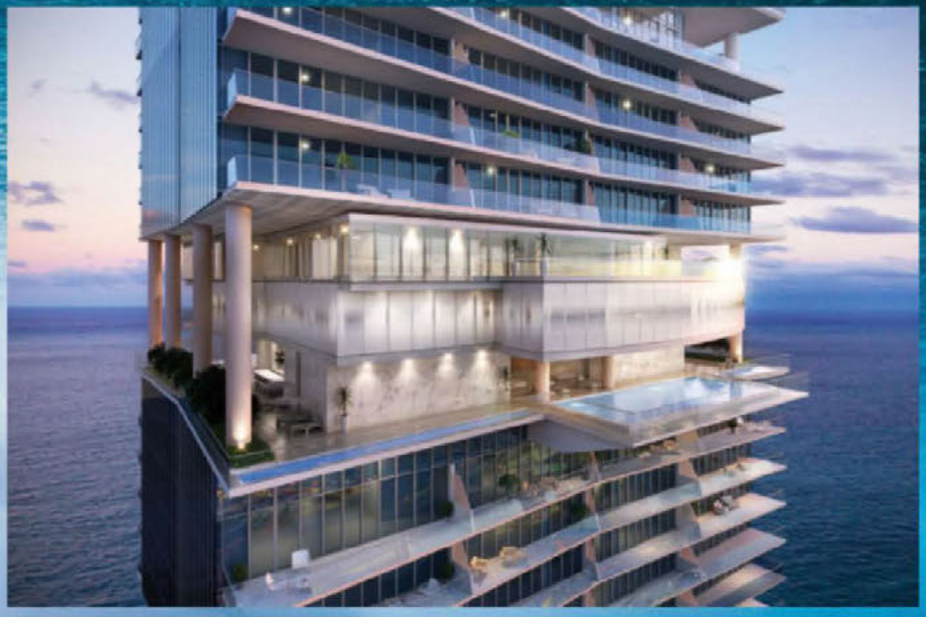
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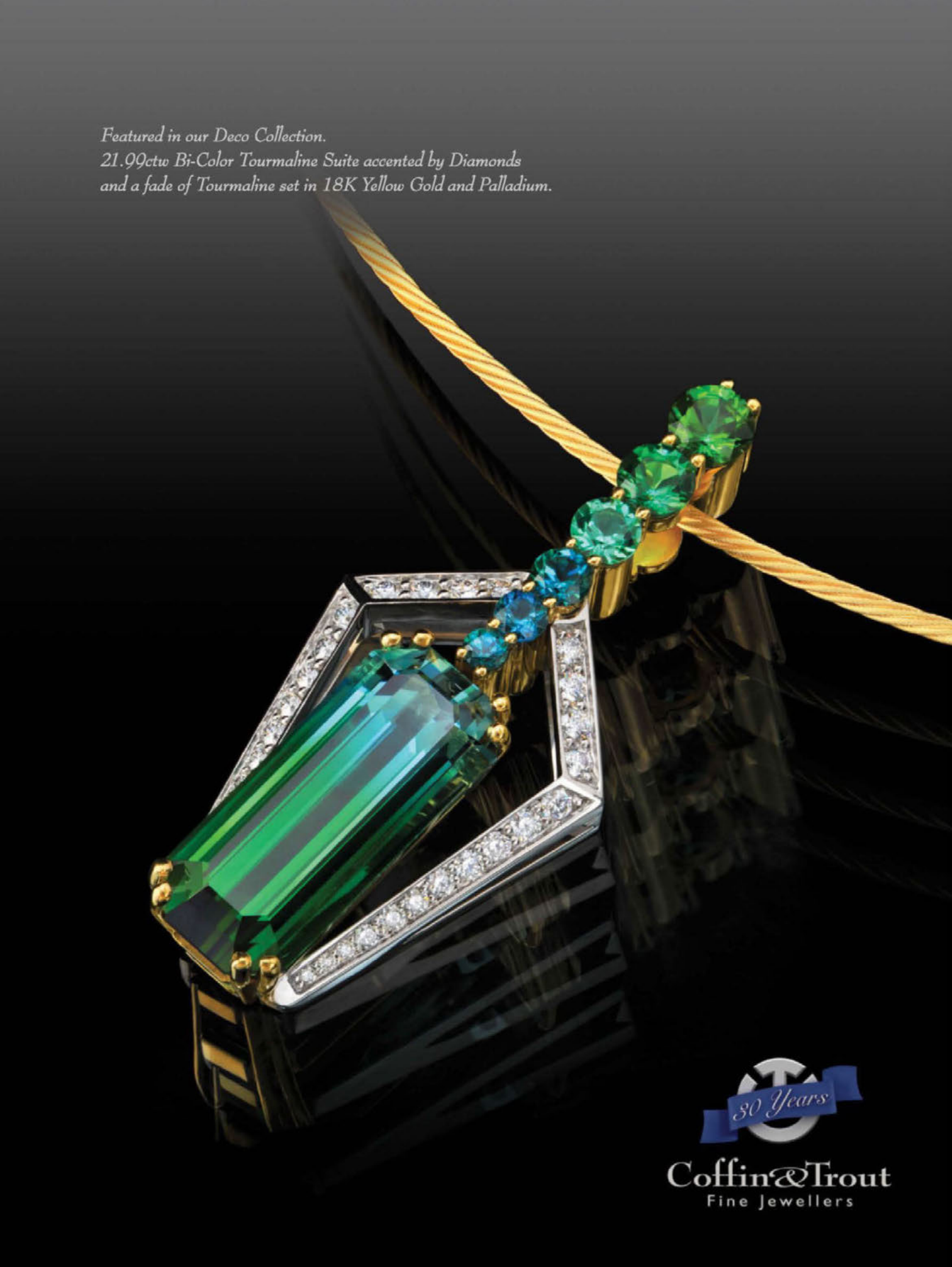
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The People's Paddle

THERE WERE HUNDREDS of bidders at the Bonhams New York History of Science auction in October, but just one of them took home the prize of the night: an original 1976 Apple-1 computer, widely considered the machine that marked the dawn of the personal computing era and one of about 70 still in existence.

It sold for a meltdown-inducing $905,000—almost double its high estimate and a record for vintage technology. But the buyer was no Internet billionaire. Instead, the winning bidder was the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., and a week after the sale, Kristen Gallerneaux, the museum's curator of communication and information technology, was still astonished that the first auction of her life also turned out to be an auction of a lifetime.

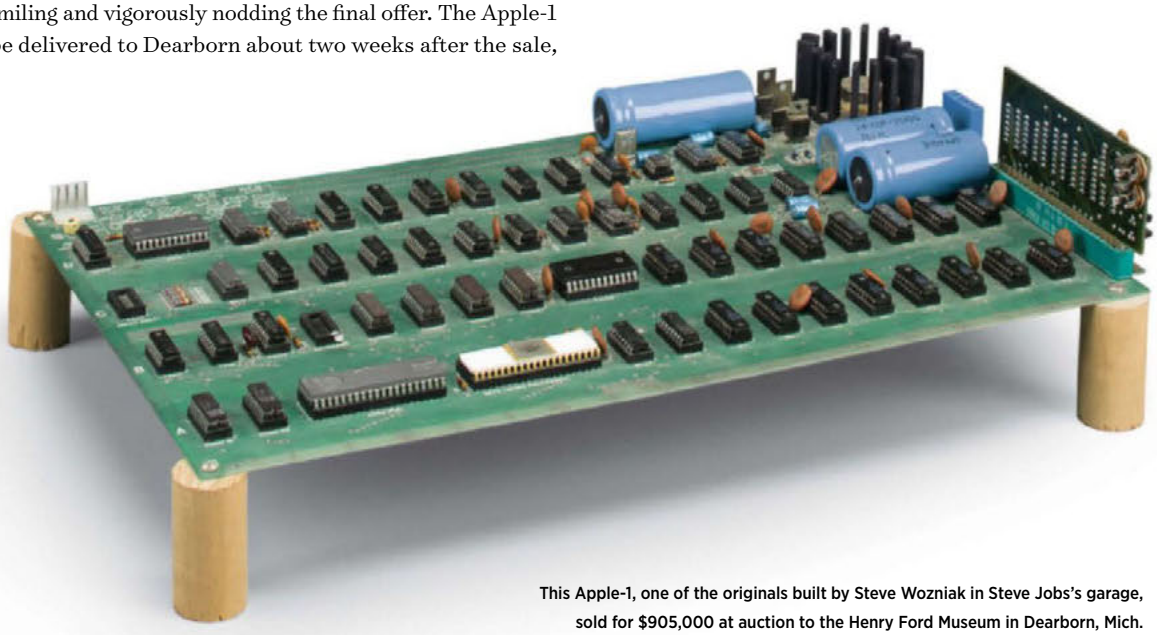
For Gallerneaux, the definition of "butterflies in your stomach" will always be Lot 286—the last lot of the night. She and a colleague representing the museum had flown to New York for the sale, while the other tech aficionados were all, rather appropriately, using personal computers to submit their bids. The museum had heard about the sale less than a week before and rushed purchase approvals though the board. An Apple-1 had long been on the wish list, and this was a particularly good example: It was owned by John Barkley Anderson, the founder of a Cincinnati Apple users group, who had stored it in a specially constructed Plexiglas vitrine. "It's beautiful—very bare bones and very pure, just the motherboard on top of four wooden legs," Gallerneaux says. "Some tech artifacts you can't actively look for. So when something like this comes up, you have to jump on it."

Altogether, the bidding took about two minutes, with Gallerneaux smiling and vigorously nodding the final offer. The Apple-1 would be delivered to Dearborn about two weeks after the sale, and was planned to be on display before the end of the year.

The Henry Ford's mission is "to document the genius of ordinary people by recognizing and preserving the objects they used in the course of their everyday lives." And it is hard to imagine an artifact that says more about individual genius, technological advancement, and perhaps most important, cultural seismic shifts. In October, we previewed this Apple-1's sale in a feature called *Obsolete Power*, about the growing cachet of vintage technology. The previous record, also held by an Apple-1, was $671,400, and we expected this one to sell for more, and to disappear into the private collection of a tech titan.

If it had, Gallerneaux says, "something pretty major would have been lost. Not that it wouldn't have been well loved, but this is something that can teach us." And as she ended the call on her iPhone, we had to agree.

Michalene Busico, Editor
mbusico@robbreport.com



BONHAMS

This Apple-1, one of the originals built by Steve Wozniak in Steve Jobs's garage, sold for $905,000 at auction to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich.



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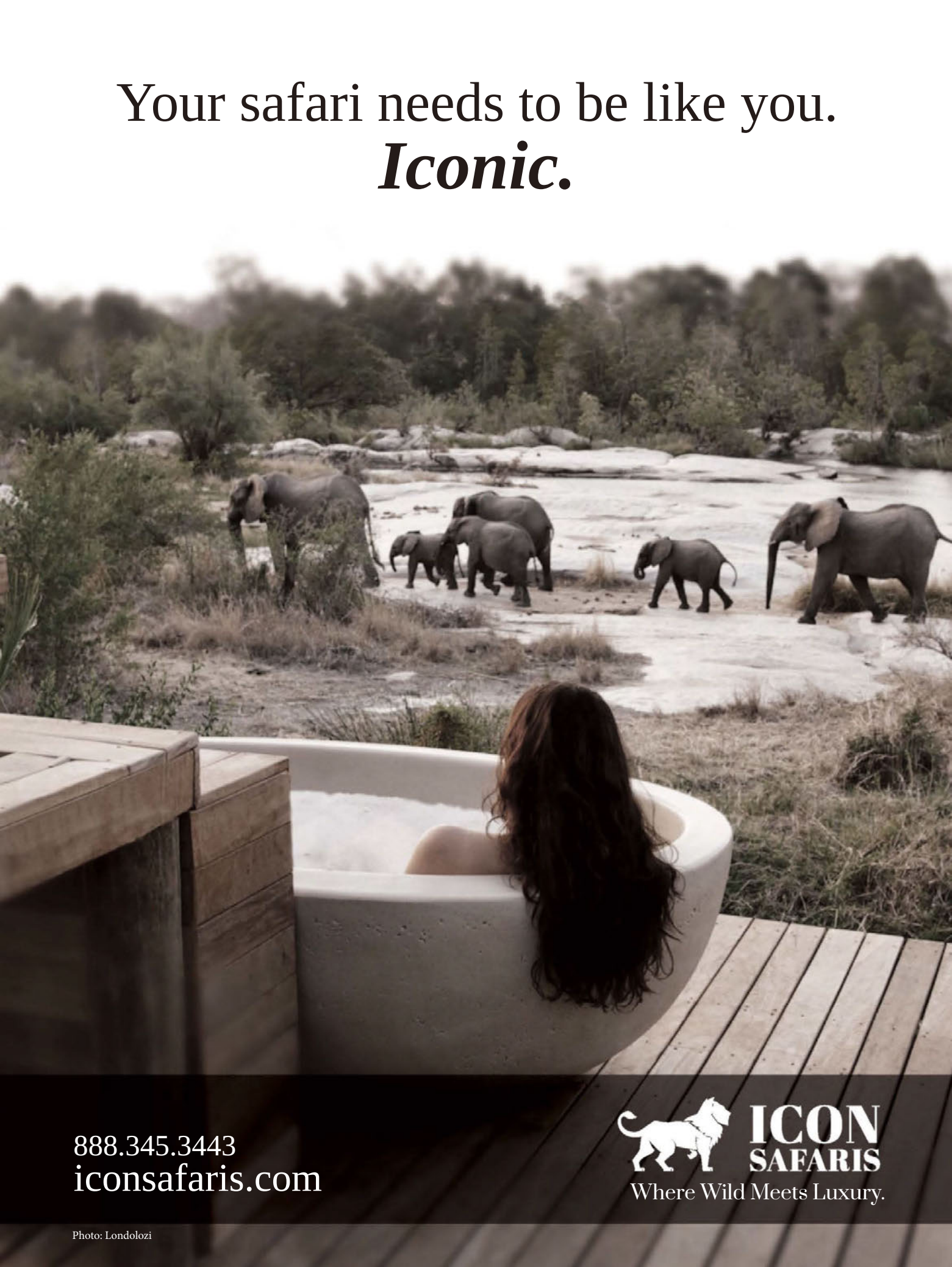
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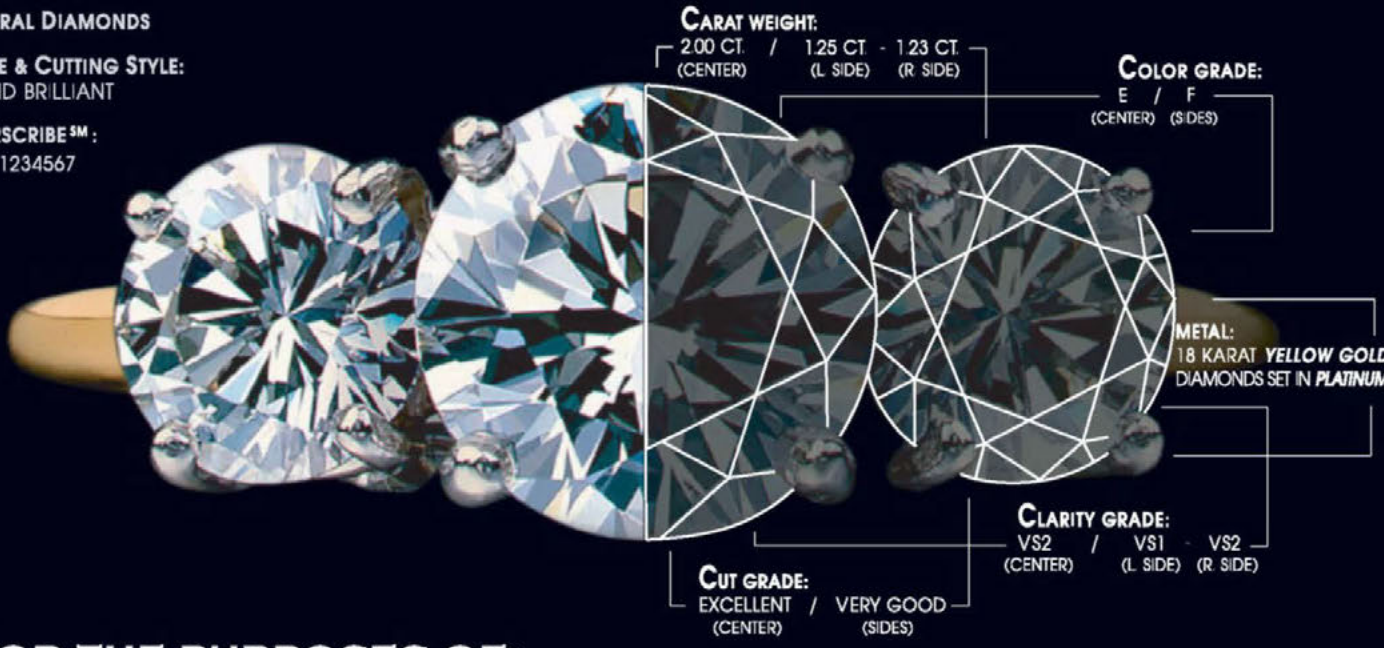
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He's Off the Bus

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, the Arizona construction magnate Ron Pratte has been the auto world's most visible collector. Seated in the front row at nearly all of Barrett-Jackson's televised auctions, like the star of a reality TV show, he bids small fortunes to acquire stunners such as a 1950 General Motors Futurliner tour bus (shown) for $4.4 million or a 1954 Pontiac Bonneville Special Motorama concept car for $3.08 million. Now, after amassing one of the premier car collections in the country, Pratte is embarking on a dramatic final episode: He is selling it all—more than 100 historic vehicles and 1,400 pieces ›

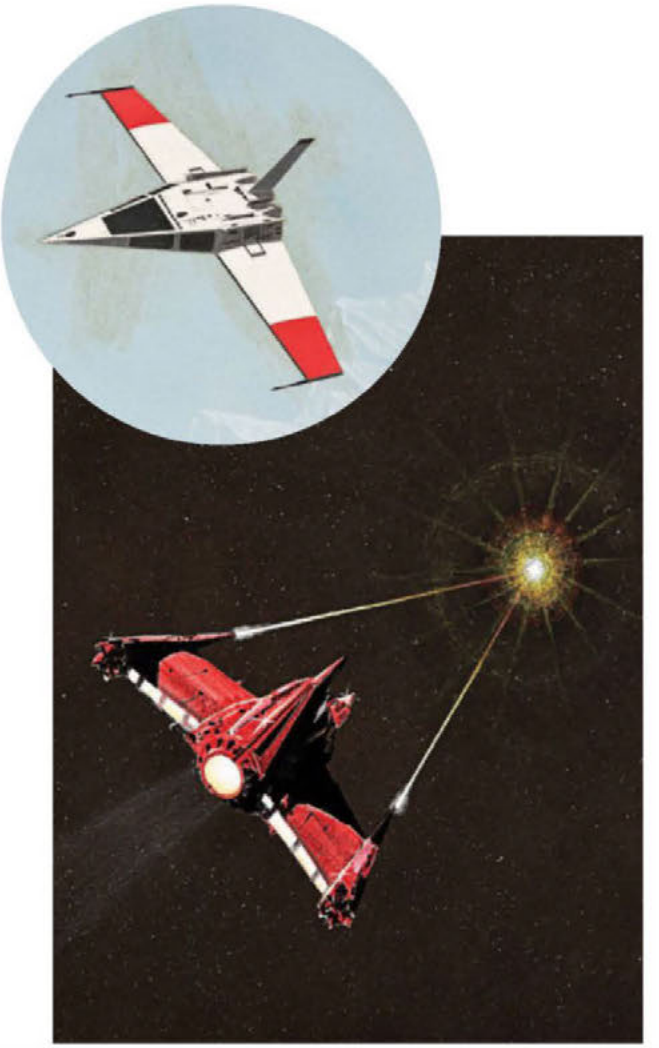
PROGRESSIVE: The 1950 GM Futurliner trumpeted the power of the American auto industry.

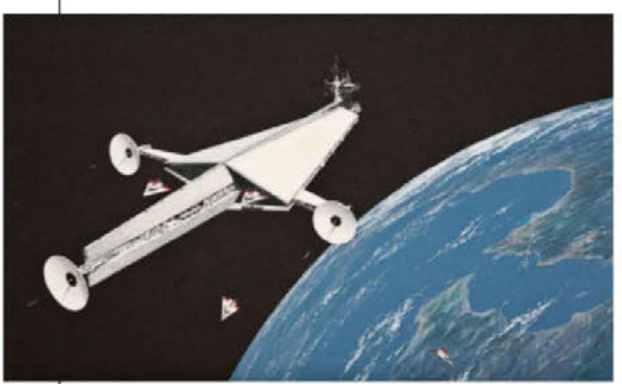
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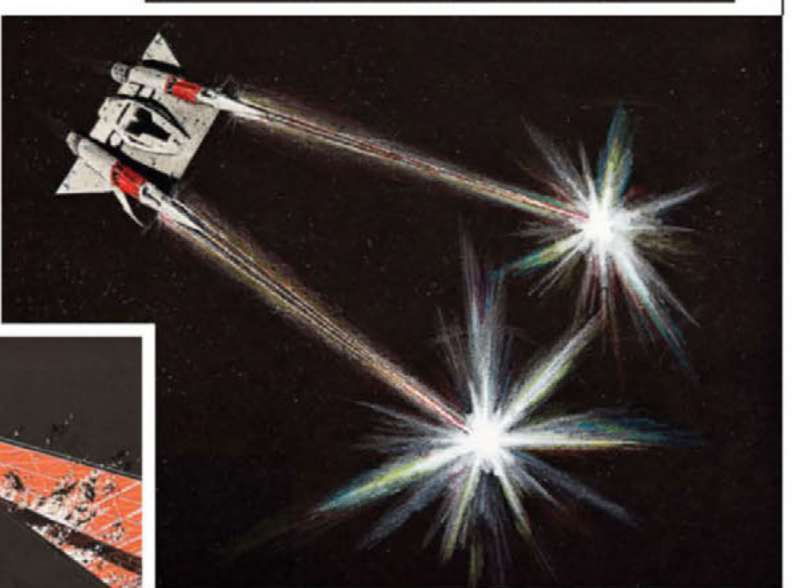
A LONG TIME AGO—around 1974—in the not-so-far-away galaxy of Lucasfilm in California, Colin Cantwell was dreaming up spacecraft for the original *Star Wars* film, which blasted into theaters in 1977. Working with an early draft of the screenplay, Cantwell created designs and models of the X-Wing Fighter, Millennium Falcon, Death Star, and other flights of imagination that would enthrall millions of moviegoers. Before building the models, Cantwell produced colored-pencil illustrations, the first representations of these spaceships. He used a similar method in 1979, supplemented with a new animation device he developed, for his preproduction work on the special effects for TV's *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*.

In his drawings for Lucas, Cantwell glued layers of paper onto backgrounds of ice-covered planets or a black universe, showing his skill in constructing animation cels. These drawings, along with the *Star Wars* screenplay, will be offered for sale this month, one year before *Star Wars VII* arrives in theaters next December. —KAREN CAKEBREAD

Estimate: *$2,500 to $5,000 each for* Star Wars *items; $250 to $500 for* Buck Rogers *drawings sold as one lot.* ***Sale:*** *Julien's Icons & Idols: Hollywood, December 5 to 6, Beverly Hills, Calif.; juliensauctions.com*









Colin Cantwell's space-themed renderings include (counterclockwise from top) a *Star Wars* X-Wing Fighter in flight mode; an early version of *Star Wars'* Imperial Star Destroyer; a battle between an X-Wing in attack mode (wings in X formation) and the Imperial Star Destroyer; a Starfighter from *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century;* and a *Buck Rogers* Marauder ship.

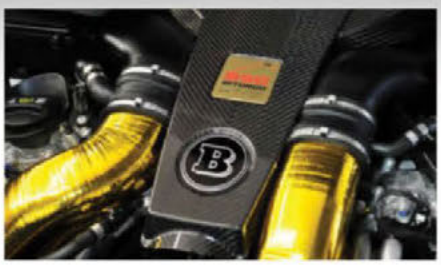
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Everything but the Popcorn

MORRIS EVERETT JR. has some movie posters and lobby cards to sell. And after collecting them for more than 50 years, he wants his project go out into the world intact—all 195,000 pieces of it. "No one else has even tried to do what Morris has done," says Daniel Strebin, the Hollywood expert at Profiles in History, which will auction Everett's movie memorabilia as a single lot in early December. The collection represents virtually every important American movie ever made—44,000 titles from 1908 to the present day—and includes a computerized catalog.

For each film, Everett set out to acquire the best mementos he could find. A *King Kong* lobby card (shown), for instance, is from the original 1933 version of the movie, before 1934's censorship code affected subsequent releases. "It has outrageous scenes—nudity, Kong eats a person. Every release after, those scenes were cut," Strebin says. The lot also includes pieces from *The Gold Rush* (1925), *Frankenstein* (1931), and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

Posters from before World War II are extremely rare, Strebin notes, because paper was donated for the war effort. But Everett discovered that posters from the 1920s and '30s were used to insulate Depression-era houses, and his finds include three from a silent film about Babe Ruth called *Babe Comes Home* (1927), found in the walls of a Washington home.

The collection, Everett says, "is 100 years of our lives—everything is there in our movies." —K.C.

Estimate: *$6 million to $8 million.* ***Sale:*** *The Morris Everett Jr. Collection Auction, Profiles in History, December, Calabasas, Calif.; for sale date, see profilesinhistory.com*

Man of Myth

When Christie's announced its sale of the Abbott-Guggenheim collection, it called the assemblage a New World version of a *kunstkammer*—a "cabinet of curiosities" chock full of stunning artifacts. The late Peter Guggenheim and his partner, John Abbott, spent six decades amassing Renaissance and Baroque clocks and sculpture, displaying the collection at their horse farm in New York's Hudson River Valley, and loaning pieces to the Louvre in Paris, the Metropolitan and Frick museums in New York, and others. Guggenheim came from a long line of art collectors, and he received his first clock—a cuckoo—from his grandfather at age 6. His holdings grew to include extremely intricate devices from three centuries, among them a German gilt astrolabic masterpiece clock that stands almost 2 feet tall ($200,000 to $300,000). The sculptures, however, embody the epic proportions of the pair's lifelong pursuit, with pieces by masters such as Stefano Maderno. At center stage is a bronze Hercules Pomarius by the 16th-century Dutch artist Willem Danielsz van Tetrode that captures the hero in a pose that ripples with intensity. —K.C.

Estimate: *$1.5 million to $2.5 million for Hercules Pomarius.* ***Sale:*** *Abbott-Guggenheim Collection, Christie's, New York City, January 27, 2015; christies.com*



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Accidental Treasure

Tobacco companies introduced the U.S. to baseball cards in the late 19th century, aiming to link the all-American pastime to the au courant trend of smoking cigarettes. But the cards really caught fire from 1909 to 1911, when the American Tobacco Co. mass-produced the T206 series, tiny cards with tinted lithographs of major- and minor-league players including Honus Wagner, who decorated baseball's most valuable card. Each T206 was also marked with a tobacconist's logo. In rare instances, a card would be marked by two brands in error; such was the case with this card for Kid Elberfeld, a slim shortstop nicknamed the Tabasco Kid. Bearing both Tolstoi and Piedmont ads, it is one of more than 1,400 T206s in a collection offered by Saco River Auction Co.

Ed Burke of Rockville Centre, N.Y., took up smoking in 1909 at age 19, and with it another habit: collecting T206s in a shoebox. He eventually gathered his fill and about 30 years later gave the cards to his son, shoebox and all. In 1993 the younger Burke passed the baseball cards along to his three children, who transferred them to plastic-sleeved albums, keeping a great majority in excellent condition. —ANUSH BENLIYAN

Estimate: *$20,000 to $30,000 for the Kid Elberfeld card.* ***Sale****: Saco River Auction Co., January 14, Biddeford, Maine; sacoriverauction.com*

Holy Tailfins!

BATMANIA WAS IN its infancy when 23-year-old Forrest Robinson and a buddy rebuilt a 1956 Oldsmobile 88 with a fiberglass body, sliding pocket doors, a dorsal fin, and a bat-nosed front end. They finished the silver-toned car—inspired by *Batman* comics of the 1950s—in 1963, and soon it was spotted by an executive from All Star Dairy, a Massachusetts co-op and DC Comics licensee that produced a line of Batman and Robin dairy products. The company leased the car, repainted it with official Batman colors and logos, and drove it around New England as the first official Batmobile.

The television Batmobile made its entrance in 1966, and Robinson sold his original for less than $200. The car sat in a New Hampshire field for almost 50 years until it was unearthed in 2008. Its current owner, Toy Car Exchange, purchased the wreck in 2013 and shipped it to Sacramento, Calif., where Borbon Fabrications spent more than a year restoring it for a debut at the Sacramento Autorama, where it was the No. 1 hand-built sports car. The first of the six TV Batmobiles sold at auction for $4.6 million in 2013. This month, its precursor might be within reach even to fans lacking Bruce Wayne's resources. —K.C.

Estimate: *$130,000.* ***Sale:*** *Heritage Auctions' Entertainment & Music Memorabilia Auction, December 6, Dallas; ha.com*





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HAMMERED

Reading the Tea Leaves

FALL ASIA WEEK in New York may attract less hoopla than the Asia Week sales in March, but the auctions are just as significant—and this year's results hint that the Chinese art market may be regaining momentum. After eclipsing the United States in 2011 to become the world's largest market for art and antiques, China dropped back to second in 2012, a slide blamed on economic slowdowns and a lack of sit-up-and-take-notice lots at auction. A report by the European Fine Art Fair, released in March, places China's total global share of the art and antiques market at 24 percent, second in the world behind the United States' 38 percent.

A review of the top September sales reveals spirited competition for a wide range of objects, which might herald a return to the breathtaking prices of the recent past. Bidders from mainland China were once again a force, but they did not claim all the prizes—a pricey pair of vases (below) at Doyle went to a Westerner. But no matter the buyer, superlative material, particularly Qianlong-era porcelain that has a long history of ownership in the West, continues to command the strongest numbers. —SHEILA GIBSON STOODLEY

Little Monster

The exceptional cloisonné work and the unusual deep, bulbous shape of this Ming Dynasty bowl commanded "superb" and "very rare" ratings from Christie's New York. "It had everything going for it—rarity, condition, and provenance," says Michael Bass of Christie's. "This certainly ranks among one of the finest examples of this period to have been offered in recent auction history."
Estimate: $300,000 to $500,000
Sold: $2.63 million





The Case of the Vase

The New York auction house Doyle says this pair of Chinese *famille rose*–covered vases dates to the 19th century. But some bidders seemed to disagree, evidently concluding that Qianlong seals on each base merit a Qianlong price. "All it takes is two to believe they are 18th century, and the price jumps to the million-dollar level," says Doyle's Marley Rabstenek.
Estimate: $10,000 to $15,000, **Sold:** $1.2 million

THIS PAGE, FAR LEFT: CHRISTIE'S IMAGES LTD.

Scroll Up

Zheng Xie, the Chinese magistrate-turned-artist, created *Bamboo and Rock*, a 94-by-48-inch hanging scroll, around 1750 when he was at the height of his artistic power. Xian Fang, a specialist in Sotheby's classical Chinese paintings department, credits the impressive results to the scroll's "grand size, close-to-perfect condition, excellent brush and ink, credible provenance, and rarity."
Estimate: $850,000 to $1.2 million, **Sold:** $2.6 million



OMG!

Chinese social media went nuts when word of Skinner Boston's impending sale of this exceptionally large, 34⅜-inch-tall fencai rose flower and landscape vase emerged in July. Only one other in the world is like it, and that vase is in the National Palace Museum in Beijing. The multiple patterns represent Chinese porcelain styles across the centuries, and would have required at least 15 trips to the kiln, any of which could have ended badly.
Estimate: $150,000 to $250,000
Sold: $24.7 million





Condition, Condition, Condition

This Ming Dynasty gilt bronze Buddha has survived with "the wear that you want to see, but not too much of it," says Bonhams New York specialist Bruce MacLaren. Its condition was a main driver behind the escalated price for the figure, which sits 22 inches tall on its own, 33 inches with its base.
Estimate: $60,000 to $80,000, **Sold:** $485,000

SEE THE WHOLE COLLECTION



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Q & A

Red and White Lies

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the notorious wine counterfeiter Rudy Kurniawan was sentenced to 10 years in prison and $48 million in restitution and punishment for a fraud scheme involving fake bottles of vintage Burgundy and Bordeaux. Much of the evidence against him came from Maureen Downey, proprietor of Chai Consulting, a cellar management firm in San Francisco with particular expertise in fraudulent bottles. Downey says that "nobody can taste for authenticity" and in fact, when she evaluates a bottle's legitimacy, it is not the liquid inside that counts, but the bottle itself that provides the clues. —DAN FREDMAN

How can you tell if you have fake wine in your collection?
The most important things to consider are the type of wine, who you bought from, and where they are located. Bordeaux from before 1982, Burgundy from 1985 and earlier, and any ultrarare wine purchased at auction or retail in the past 15 years is at risk, particularly if you purchased it in Hong Kong or if your source did business with known counterfeiters Rudy Kurniawan or Hardy Rodenstock.

Is this still a problem now that Kurniawan is in jail?
I estimate that there's at least $130 million of Rudy's wine in the marketplace. While a lot of these bottles are now being dumped at auctions in Asia, many are still being moved privately through retailers and brokers around the world. To say that this is an auction house–only problem is immensely shortsighted. Most of them cleaned up their act by 2005, when word began spreading about Rudy's fakes, but others maintained a "he's innocent until proven guilty" attitude and continued to sell bogus wines. Some retailers continue to turn a blind eye to the problem, and many brokers never actually see the bottles they're selling and thus claim no responsibility.

What is your recourse if you find a counterfeit bottle?
Several things can happen. When we determine bottles to be problematic or fake, we prepare reports and send the clients back to the vendors. We work for restitution at current market value, since these are invariably investment-quality wines. Retailers have a high responsibility to accurately provide what they're representing for sale. In over 90 percent of these situations the vendor returns the money, but if they don't, we get the FBI involved and go to court.

What are you looking for when you check out a wine?
The three biggest physical tells are the print method on the label, the glass used

Maureen Downey, inspecting a counterfeit magnum of 1959 Lafite Rothschild, has identified fakes including a 1949 Clos Saint-Denis, a wine never produced by Domaine Ponsot, and forged labels for Les Gaudichots.

OFF THE PRESS

A Letter-Perfect Brew

STERN GRAVEUR, the Parisian engraver of gala invitations, menus, and announcements for royalty and presidents since 1834, has traded its copperplates and letterpresses for a Faema espresso machine. Stern's 1,100-square-foot workshop in Passage des Panoramas—one of Europe's first commercial arcades—has been transformed into Caffè Stern (caffestern.com) by brothers Massimiliano and Raffaele Alajmo of Le Calandre restaurant in Padua, in partnership with David Lanher, the Paris restaurateur behind Racines wine bar. Many of the shop's original elements remain, such as the centuries-old Cordoba leather walls, parquet fougère hardwood floors, and intricately carved pillars, now enhanced with some darkly madcap touches by Philippe Starck, including a bejeweled and stuffed lynx and wolf that flank the entry. The Michelin three-star chef Massimiliano Alajmo has created a menu of modern Italian classics, with a wine list to match by the Italian sommelier Mirko Favalli. An impressive coffee menu by Gianni Frasi, the coffee roaster from Verona's Laboratorio di Torrefazione Giamaica Caffè, features a miniature cappuccino from Trieste called "Li per li" to pair with pastries and *viennoiseries*.

—AMANDA MILLIN



Postcards from the Past

Although Stern Graveur (sterngraveur.com) gave up its historic Passage des Panoramas location in 2008, the company continues to use its antique presses to engrave and print custom invitations, announcement cards, and more at its new Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré address in Paris. Enthusiasts can also purchase vintage pieces from the company's limited collection of archival brass- and copperplate-engraved cotton-sheet cards, such as this postcard from 1890 that depicts a young man serenading two ladies, mimicking the work of the 18th-century French painter Nicolas Lancret. Stern will also personalize the antique cards with custom engravings, staying true to its identity as a liaison between the past and present. —ANUSH BENLIYAN



TOP: FAUSTO MAZZAY; BOTTOM: STERN GRAVEUR

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ON THE ROAD

Up Shift

SALEEN, the Southern California–based performance car maker, is best known for its pulse-quickening aftermarket upgrades of iconic American muscle cars such as the Ford Mustang and the Chevrolet Camaro, as well as its own supercar, the Saleen S7. But this year at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, Saleen added an unexpected dimension to its automotive stable with the introduction of its first all-electric vehicle, the Saleen Foursixteen (saleen.com).



Based on a Tesla P85 Model S, the Foursixteen retains the original car's 85 kWh battery and its namesake 416 hp motor. But the gear train has been reworked, giving the car modestly improved acceleration and—perhaps more important—a more aggressive whine. The front fascia and back end have been remodeled to improve aerodynamics and airflow, while also lending the coupe a much sportier look. In addition to the slew of upgrades that come standard on the Foursixteen—which is priced from $152,000, $58,600 more than a standard Model S—Saleen also offers options including larger wheels, carbon ceramic brakes, bucket seats, and showcar paint (all loaded on the model here). One optional feature, however, may be the Foursixteen's most practical improvement over the Tesla Model S: a pair of cup holders. –JOHN LYON

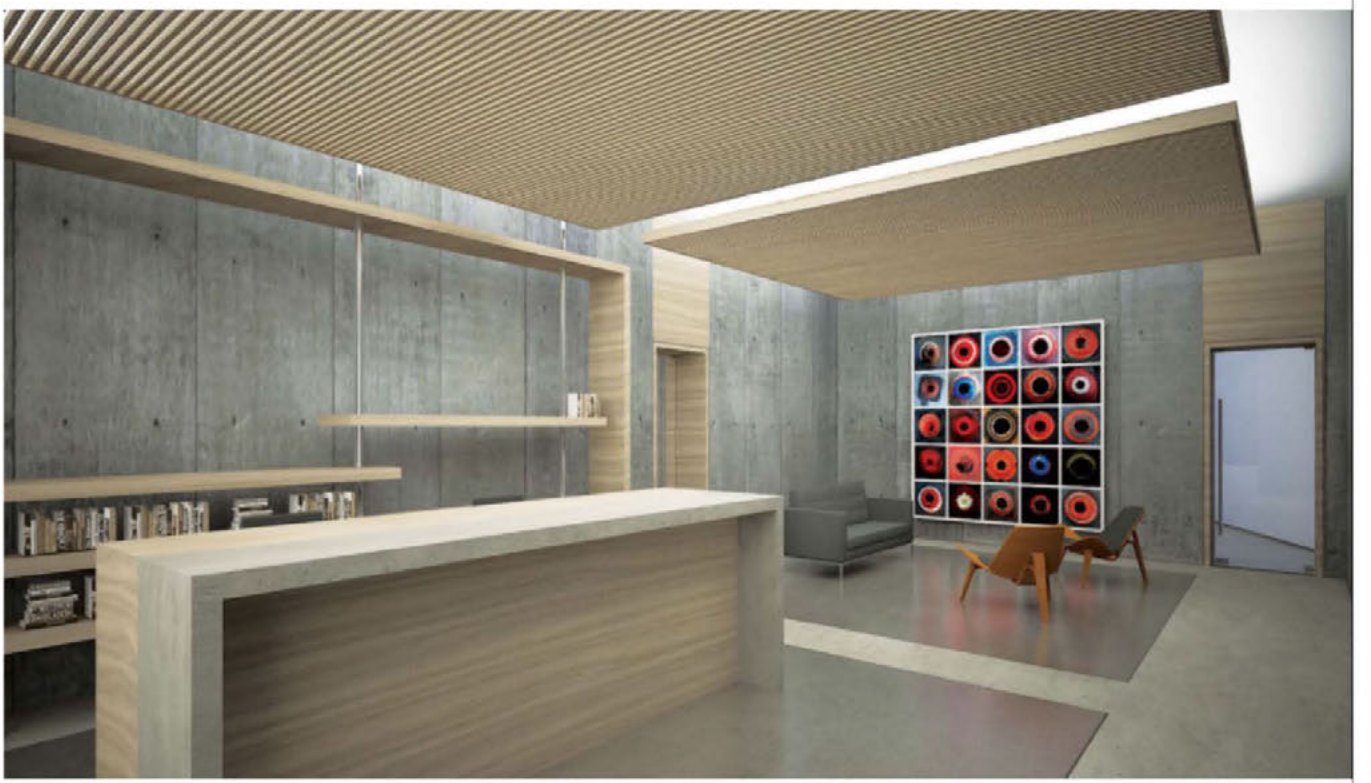


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STATE OF THE ART

A Haven for Hirsts (and Much More)

WHEN HURRICANE SANDY blew through New York City in October 2013, it wreaked havoc on the city's art galleries, museums, and private collections, destroying more than $200 million worth of paintings, sculptures, and other artwork. Now the Manhattan art collector and real-estate magnate Steve Guttman has created a fortress for fine art: Uovo:NYC (uovo.org), a first-of-its-kind art storage center that opened in Long Island City in November, offers collectors a facility that matches—and perhaps even exceeds—the high-tech and high-security conditions of some of the world's finest art museums.



Located within two purpose-built structures totaling 280,000 square feet, Uovo's temperature- and humidity-controlled storage spaces feature a comprehensive air-filtration system. The areas can be customized in size and dimension, ranging from 50 to 50,000 square feet for collections both large and small; monthly rent starts at $5 to $7 per square foot. Artwork arrives via two successive covered loading docks and an air-lock chamber, ensuring a thermally stable environment during all phases of transportation. Once stored, clients' collections can be tracked via Uovo's online digital inventory system, as well as viewed in the facility's private gallery spaces. There is already at least one prominent tenant: the Museum of Modern Art.

"Uovo is creating something entirely new for collectors," Guttman says. "There is nothing else like this in the United States—maybe even the world."

—JACKIE CARADONIO

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IN THE CELLAR

Singular Sips

LEO ROBITSCHEK, the acclaimed bar director of the NoMad Hotel and Eleven Madison Park restaurant, grew up in Venezuela, without much appreciation for spirits of any kind. His "aha" moment came after he moved to New York and on a whim, ordered a 12-year-old Cragganmore. "I had seen a lot of single malts, but not that one," he recalls. "Now, proportionally, I have too much of a like for these things."

Indeed, Cragganmore is still his favorite single-malt Scotch, and the libation he is most likely to pour at home. A gifted creator of cocktails, Robitschek prefers great single malts pure and direct: from a single cask, at cask strength, and served neat. Even a little water will shift the flavor profile toward the green flavors, robbing the spirit of nuance and those beloved vanilla, toffee, and tannic notes.

At his latest project, the NoMad Bar, Robitschek keeps a cache of rare and aged spirits locked behind an iron grate. He recently liberated his five top single malts for collectors, including a $2,000 bottle of 25-year-old Yamazaki Japanese Whisky, one of just 100 released to the United States this year. "This is a bottle people were waiting for for a long time," he says, picking it up. "I just got this two days ago. It's delicious. Let's taste it."

—MICHALENE BUSICO

"It's cool to see the expression of a Scotch from one single cask. It's like drinking a piece of history: You'll never be able to taste this again."

—LEO ROBITSCHEK, BAR DIRECTOR, NOMAD HOTEL



1 / *Samaroli Linkwood Coilltean 1983* *($350–$370)*

Just 390 bottles were released of this single-cask Speyside single malt, selected by Silvano Samaroli, Italy's leading whisky specialist. "He's also playing with rums and whiskey, but I like his single malts in particular," Robitschek says. "This is from his private aging—distilled in 1983, bottled in 2011. It's super vanilla forward, lots of heat, and almost some salted popcorn. It's very tasty."



2 / *James MacArthur's 13-Year-Old Old Masters Cragganmore* *($80)*

"This is my favorite malt," Robitschek says of this release from James MacArthur, an independent bottler who sources single casks of rare Scotch and releases them at full strength. In this bottling from Cragganmore's Speyside distillery, he says, "the heat is definitely present but it's so complex and so rich, I drink it without any ice. It has a rich toffeeness and a little bit of smoke."



The Mixers

The Manhattan cocktail renaissance has inspired a shelf full of serious books about the art of making a good drink. Two of the latest—*Alchemy in a Glass* by Greg Seider (Rizzoli, $25) and *Death & Co: Modern Classic Cocktails* by David Kaplan, Nick Fauchald, and Alex Day (Ten Speed Press, $40)—offer dozens of classic and contemporary recipes, but more important, they present distinct cocktail philosophies that are likely to change the way you think about and mix drinks. Seider, known for his nuanced drinks at the Manhattan Cricket Club, deconstructs all cocktails into a single formula and reveals his secret ingredient: an arsenal of house-made tinctures and bitters, which act as "synergists" to highlight and bind ingredients. The Death & Co. team, however, provides the keys to the liquor cabinet, dispensing every drop of wisdom acquired by the innovators behind the Death & Co. bar. From detailed techniques, such as three pages on how to stir, to obsessively detailed guides to ingredients and equipment, this book will encourage experiments beyond the concoctions like Pete's Word, made with peaty Laphroaig, lime juice, and Chartreuse. —M.B.



3 / *The Yamazaki 25-Year-Old Japanese Whisky* ($1,600–$2,000)

Last year, only 19 bottles of the first release of the 25-year-old came into the United States. This year, the allotment was 100. "Japanese whisky tends to have more heather flavors—they use sherry and bourbon casks but also Japanese oak, which is super rare—and they put a little peat in the malt as well. I like this one for the balance of the wood: There's a lot of prettiness up front and then a lot of texture."



4 / *Bruichladdich Black Art 4.1, 1990* ($290–$370)

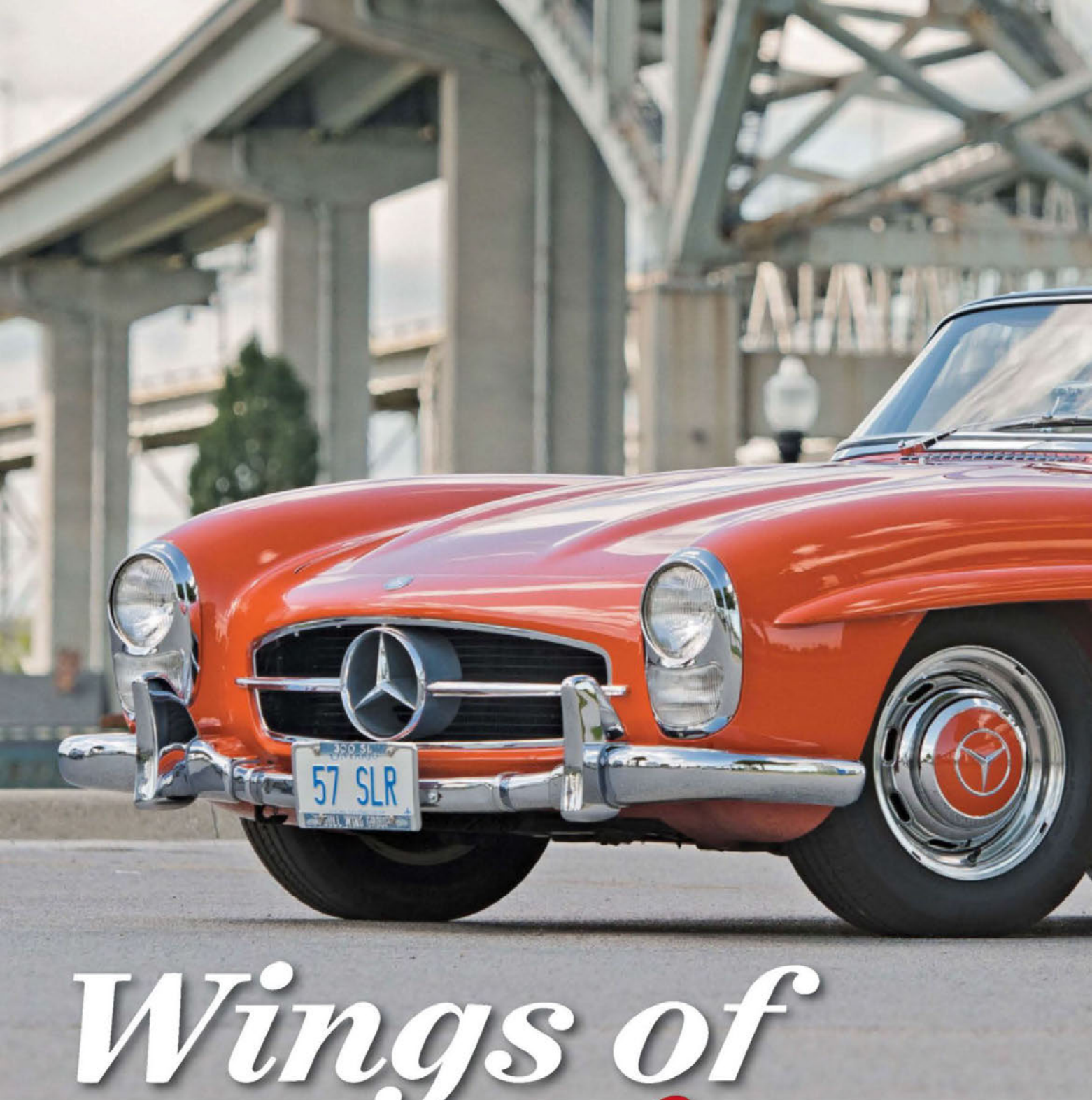
A relatively classic release from this progressive distillery, the Black Art changes every year; this 23-year-old Islay whisky was finished in a combination of wine casks and bottled at cask strength. "It is unpeated, but you still get the traditional salinity and iodine, just not too overpowering. The 2014 is good too—but the 2013 is wonderful. They're doing some great stuff. They're making Scotland cool again."



5 / *Murray McDavid Bowmore 1999* ($70–$90)

The experimental master distiller Jim McEwan ages this 11-year-old Islay in old bourbon barrels and finishes it in a Château d'Yquem barrel. "Flavors that you would not think go well together," Robitschek says. "But you get the toffee-smoky note, and the honey note, and it drinks so easily." Rémy Cointreau bought Bowmore in 2012 and is no longer importing this to the United States. It can still be found at retail—for now.

BOTTLES AND PORTRAIT: CORDEROSTUDIOS.COM



Wings of Fire

Mercedes-Benz 300 SLs are soaring at auction.

By Matt Crossman

Five years ago, Peter Fodor started a hunt. As a serious collector of vintage cars, he knew he lacked an essential piece: a Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing. From the roof-hinged doors and iconic lines to the speed and engineering that surpassed any car of its era, the Gullwing is a rare bird indeed, a classic supercar that is still so beautiful and so relevant that Tesla is cribbing its design ideas.



TOP: DARIN SCHNABEL/RM AUCTIONS; BOTTOM: HUGH HAMILTON



An admittedly picky man—by profession, Fodor is a plastic surgeon in Los Angeles—he spent years trawling auctions and classic-car sales across the country. He purchased one Gullwing only to sell it partly because it was *too* perfect to drive. Finally, last August, he landed his ideal: a luminous red 1955 Gullwing that he does not mind getting dirty as he blows down the highway.

"Just opening those Gullwing doors is a very special feeling," Fodor says. "You can't help thinking about the old Italian Mille Miglia when Sir Stirling Moss was racing those cars. Every

> "The 300 SL Gullwing is in fact the closest thing to a racecar Mercedes has delivered to the public since World War II."
>
> —Bob Sirna, past president of the Gull Wing Group International

button on the dashboard is like a Swiss clock; the click they make is so fresh and special."

Now, when he swings down the doors and hits the road, he sits in a work of art as intricate as a Fabergé egg, perhaps the most historically significant model Mercedes-Benz ever produced—and without doubt, one of the hottest cars on the market.

In just the last year, prices for the 300 SL Gullwing and its sister car, the 300 SL Roadster, have skyrocketed. The average price of a Mercedes-Benz 300 SL sold at auction has almost doubled since 2011, from $705,024 to $1.35 million, according to data collected by Hagerty, which specializes in insurance for collector cars. Auction houses Barrett-Jackson, Gooding & Co., Russo and Steele, and RM all sold 300 SLs in 2014, with high bids ranging from $1.1 million to $2.5 million. In each of the last three years, Barrett-Jackson has sold a Gullwing for at least $2 million, including one formerly owned by Clark Gable for $2.035 million in 2013.

A 1955 Gullwing (center and left) sold for $2.09 million at Barrett-Jackson's January sale. Top: Clark Gable's Gullwing. Previous spread, top: a 1957 Roadster in RM Auctions' January 2015 sale ($950,000 to $1.2 million); bottom: Peter Fodor's red Gullwing.

FAR RIGHT: TIM HEIT

Gullwing versus Roadster

In the battle of the Mercedes-Benz 300 SLs, there are no losers.



	▲ GULLWING	▼ ROADSTER
DESIGN	The roof-hinged doors are one of the most famous innovations in automotive design, in a car that has many of them. Designer Rudolf Uhlenhaut brought the Gullwing from idea to racetrack.	Sleek lines create a refined look, and every crease and crevice is immaculate and exists for a reason. Today, such design is called "fully integrated," but few cars had it in the 1950s.
DRIVE	A racecar made for the road. Its low weight (2,850 pounds) relative to its power (215 hp) explains why it is so fast. The Bosch direct cylinder fuel injection was so ahead of its time that it was not applied to large-scale production for decades.	Considerably more comfortable than the Gullwing because it is a convertible. Some also consider the Roadster better for driving because of improvements in its handling (single-joint swing axle instead of the Gullwing's double) and disc brakes.
RESTORATION	For a simple job (paint, upholstery, minor mechanical, and bodywork): $300,000. For "everything": $600,000 and up. "There's almost no maximum," says Mike Inase at Scott Grundfor Co. "Every time I think there is, I exceed it."	The convertible top is almost as difficult as the notorious Gullwing doors; if it does not fit right, it is like wearing baggy socks, Inase says. Bottom line: The cost is about the same as a Gullwing. "I'd be splitting hairs to quote a difference," he says.
FAMOUS OWNER	Clark Gable, who serviced the car (shown, top) at Mercedes-Benz of Hollywood, where he paid $10.83 for a lube/oil change	Natalie Wood, who famously had it painted pink
NUMBER PRODUCED	1,400 (1954 to 1957)	1,858 (1957 to 1963)
TOP LOTS *(source: Hagerty Insurance)*	$4.62 million for a 1955 alloy body model at the Gooding & Co. auction in Scottsdale, Ariz., 2012	$2.035 million for a 1964 model (shown, bottom) at the Gooding & Co. auction at Amelia Island, Fla., 2014 —M.C.



THIS PAGE, TOP: TIM HET; OPPOSITE PAGE: HUGH HAMILTON

> "Every button on the dashboard is like a Swiss clock; the click they make is so fresh and special."
>
> —Peter Fodor, Gullwing owner

common description, and the car has a popular appeal that belies its sophistication. With the first-ever direct fuel injection in a production car and tubular space frame of autogenously welded steel tubes instead of a traditional chassis, it gained a reputation as a technological marvel.

The doors gave the Gullwing an aesthetic distinction no other marque could match. Sitting in the car and pulling the doors down to close them is like strapping into a jet fighter and sealing the canopy. They have been copied over the years by marques ranging from DeLorean to Tesla, which will release its Model X, an SUV with gullwing doors, next year. But the doors on the 300 SL were always more pretty than practical: The windows do not roll down, and the original cars have no air-conditioning. The car makes some people feel claustrophobic, and on a hot day, driving one is like driving a barbecue, says Craig Jackson, chairman and CEO of Barrett-Jackson Auction Co. The windows can be taken out, but that is hardly a good solution.

Auction prices for Mercedes-Benz 300 SLs have almost doubled since 2011. This 1955 Gullwing with a red interior is being offered by Scott Grundfor Co. for $1.6 million.

In 1957, the company announced the end of the Gullwing era and the birth of its sister car, the Roadster, whose production continued until 1963. By revising the frame, the Roadster's engineers made conventional doors and convertible tops possible. Yet Gullwings and Roadsters—both known as 300 SLs—are so closely related that when Fodor started his hunt, he would have been content to buy one or the other.

Or both.



Like wine, cigars have a series of peaks in which their flavors ebb and flow.



Top: A cabinet of 10 Davidoff 80th Aniversario cigars was estimated at $8,000 $12,800 by C.Gars Ltd. Right: A humidor at the French Laundry in Napa Valley holds a selection of rare cigars.

continued combination of limited availability, extra-long aging, and word-of-mouth reputation, the OpusX has become one of the most collectible cigars in the world.

"Pre-embargo handmade cigars from Cuba remain important to most collectors," says Alex Svenson, chief merchant at Cigar.com. This online source of collectible cigars includes what are probably the oldest cigars for sale anywhere: a box of West End 5 × 40 Cheroot perfectos made with Cuban tobacco by D.G. Weaver in Springfield, Ohio, in 1868, and listed at $450 each. "But there are also some exciting products out there with real history that were made after the embargo," says Svenson. "Last year we brought in a box of Partagas that were rolled in Jamaica. Most people don't realize that when Ramón Cifuentes left Cuba with the U.S. rights to Partagas, he first made the brand in Jamaica before shifting production to the Dominican Republic." Other interesting post-embargo lots at Cigar.com may soon include Joya de Nicaraguas from 1969, one of the first years of production for Nicaragua's oldest cigar brand and older Macanudo Vintages, which Svenson says are heating up in value. "I haven't seen a box of Vintage 1979 in almost five years, and certain clients have offered $30,000 for a box of 10 if I could track one down in good condition."

Edward Sahakian and his son Eddie, owners of Davidoff of London and a cigar lounge at the Bulgari Hotel in Knightsbridge, see increased collector interest in Dunhill and Davidoff cigars made in Cuba before the two companies transferred their factories to the Dominican Republic. Edward also offers guidelines for collectors: "A collectible cigar from today's perspective, with potential to become significantly more valuable in the future, would ideally have the following qualities: It will be a top-quality and desirable brand; it will be in a size that is in demand—for example, a robusto is better than a Lonsdale; it will originally be a limited edition; and it will have excellent provenance."

By provenance, Sahakian means the cigar will have been stored professionally and sourced from a reliable vendor. A merchant should be willing to discuss how its cigars are stored and aged, and where the stock was sourced. Cigars need proper storage, at an average temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit with 70 percent humidity, although vintage examples should be stored colder and drier. Improperly stored cigars can dry out, although they might be rehumidified if oils remain in the leaves. But if a

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DECADES IN THE MAKING

Auction action begins on Saturday, January 10, with the Ron Pratte Automobilia Collection. Collector cars begin crossing the block Monday. Feature sales include the Ron Pratte Car Collection on Tuesday the 13th and the Barrett-Jackson Salon Collection on Saturday the 17th.

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The lavish walk-in humidor at the Wellesley in London holds what is most likely the world's largest selection of rare cigars, including a 40th Anniversary Cohiba Behike from 2005 that costs about $7,200.

wrapper cracks, the cigar has lost value and may be unsmokable, depending on the severity and location of the flaw. That is one reason it is important to examine a box of rare cigars before purchasing it.

In very exceptional instances, a buyer may be allowed to smoke a well-aged cigar to judge its quality before purchasing the rest of the box, but this preferential treatment is reserved only for top customers and only with a broken (not full) box, as removing one cigar from a full box would diminish the total box value. Like wine, cigars have a series of peaks in which their flavors ebb and flow, and there is no real way to tell if a cigar has aged well without sampling it. That means collectors should expect some "luck of the draw" when purchasing extremely old cigars, even if they have been well humidified and have a fine bouquet. Some Cuban cigars can be aged 40 years or more, mellowing as time passes depending on brand, blend, and storage conditions, but there is a point of no return when the cigar may become totally bland. On average, all cigars—whether Cuban or not—are best smoked at 10 to 20 years of age.

AS HIGH-END CIGARS BECOME MORE valuable, so does provenance. That point was illustrated a little too clearly when a well-known actor invited a friend into their club's walk-in humidor and proudly showed off his latest acquisition: a glass-topped box of Cohiba Espléndidos, one of the most coveted Cuban cigars. He had purchased this treasure at a bargain price, which added to his exultation. But one expert look at the multihued cigars, visible through the lid, and it was clear: They were fakes.

They were of varying hues, but Cuba, and practically every other premium cigar maker, meticulously color-sorts its hand-rolled cigars to ensure that those in each box have matched wrappers in the same shade of brown. Moreover, Cubatabaco, Cuba's governmental tobacco monopoly, has never produced a glass-topped Cohiba box.

Knockoffs are most common among popular Cuban brands such as Cohiba, Montecristo, and the Cuban Davidoff, which ceased being made in 1991, but counterfeiters do not limit themselves to fake Cubans. The Nicaraguan Padrón and the Fuente Fuente OpusX from the Dominican Republic are also frequent targets, which in 2001 led Padrón to start numbering its cigar bands serially to thwart forgeries.

"A close look should help you determine whether the product is genuine or counterfeit," says Dennis Kelly, head sommelier at the French Laundry. "Significant variations in color and size can be an obvious sign of counterfeits. Soft spots, uneven construction, and mold can be red flags. The cellophane wrappers on older cigars should have a soft, oily brown patina."

Although technology has made finding collectible cigars more convenient, it also makes their authentication more challenging, since it is now easier to fake bands and boxes. Even Cuba's new holographic stamp, which was designed to prevent counterfeiting, has been reproduced. In many cases, authentic bands are stolen from the factories to use on knockoff cigars. "The collector should not lose touch with common sense," Eddie Sahakian says. "If a deal is too good to be true, then it probably is not true."

MICHELLE CHAPLOW


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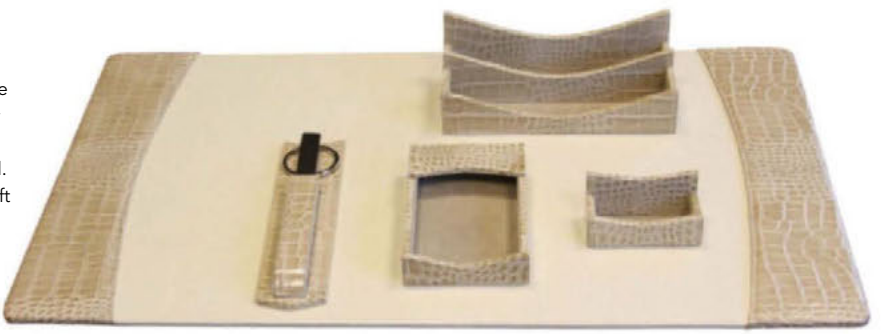
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And by that he not only means the startling contrast between the exterior and interior, but what is in the rooms themselves. Every space has been deliberately designed to display his collection of top-notch contemporary art.

Even Ferris could not have expected how enamored he would become with the house when he came upon it about five years ago. It was the land—15 bosky acres in Weston, Conn.—that initially caught his eye, so he went again and again to look at the property. The house was beautifully sited, and the more he studied it, the more he responded to its aesthetic. "If I can appreciate a structure, whether it's a glass box or a romantically inspired Tudor, then I can live in it, I can feel a part of it," he says. "And I came to realize that I could live in this house in a contemporary way."

Ferris's 1910 Tudor Revival home makes a dynamic counterpoint for his collection of contemporary art. In the living room, two Jenny Holzer works hang behind an orange B&B Italia sofa, with more textual art—a Nathan Coley light box—visible through the doorway.





PAUL RIVERA/ARCH PHOTO

His first notion was to gut the interior and modernize it. Previous owners had already compromised its historical integrity—they had ripped out the base and crown moldings, covered up the beams, ruined the bookcases, changed the floors. But then Ferris reconsidered: Wouldn't it be more fitting and affecting to restore all the details, to honor the intention of the architect who had designed it in 1910? "I decided that I'd rather get out the old drawings and reinstate it in its entirety as an artifact, but everything else—the art, the furnishings—would be of the moment," he says. "For the most part I put it back together the way it was, and then I did my own thing."

Once the renovations were complete, Ferris made what might seem to be a counterintuitive gesture: He moved the interior into the 21st century by

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his, would display fine plates. The images depict the undersides of airplanes, and from an architectural standpoint, they add verticality to the room, making it feel taller because the planes are flying upward. "And in a poetic sense, they give flight to open conversation," says Ferris. "They create a lighter, more fluid atmosphere." The light fixture is suggestive of a fuselage, adding to the airplane motif but also relating to the shape of the table. "We have most of our family meals in there, so I wanted chairs that were contemporary but also had an old-fashioned, homey aspect—to me, these look like upside-down brooms." Again, the placement of the textual art was specific: Robert Indiana's *Hope* reflects the general mood of the room, a feeling of buoyancy and optimism.

Wandering back to the entry where the story of the house begins, there is that stunning metallic sculpture reminiscent of a suit of armor. With its shadows and planes, it is both human and architectural. But most of all, says Ferris, "it's really an embodiment of myself. In a sense, it's me, standing there watching over everything."

He integrates contemporary art with his life in a highly personal and intimate way, and the idea of living without it would be akin to living without architecture—too bleak to even consider. Collector or not, Ferris intends to keep adding pieces to his home and office. "I don't have everything I want yet," he says, "but for now I'm perfectly happy with what I've got."



Ferris hung *Red Screen #1* by Liz Deschenes in an upstairs hallway. "The piece has enormous depth within the color," he says. "And the upstairs hallway recieves an abundance of indirect daylight, which brilliantly illuminates it."

ANNE HAN

Getting the Hang of It

TO OWN A SIGNIFICANT collection of artwork is one thing, but to properly display it is another. Here are some pointers from Roger Ferris, who hangs his artwork in both a precise and subjective way, based on his architectural sensibilities and his artistic eye.

White walls make the best backdrop for contemporary art. I like flat whites, and I only use Donald Kaufman (donaldkaufmancolor.com) whites because they have so much depth and transparency. In my own house, I painted the walls DKC67, a soft white that seems to absorb light instead of bouncing it back.

When I'm hanging art, I consider the floor to be part of the foreground. The amount of space the eye perceives before the floor hits the wall is part of what gives a piece presence. If there isn't enough, the art isn't set off. If there's too much, you lose all sense of scale. The foreground needs to be a solid surface, uninterrupted by an area rug. If there's a carpet, it should be neutral, not patterned.

I don't group pieces. It can get confusing to have them all over a wall, like too much background noise. I prefer a sense of singularity, to give each individual artwork the attention and focus it deserves.

To illuminate art, I install lighting in the ceiling, about four to five feet from the wall, using low-voltage MR16 halogen bulbs. You can get fixtures with a variety of beam spreads, but typically the angle of the light should strike the center of the artwork between 30 and 45 degrees.

Art comes alive in natural light. And I happen to like seeing a piece the way the artist saw it when it was being created in a daylit studio. But I would never put a painting or lithograph or photograph in direct light. And I always put UV-resistant glass on the windows. —B.K.

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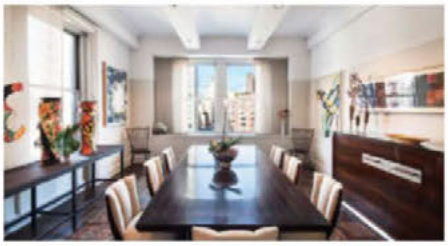
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25 Columbus Circle, 56D. The 2 BR, 3 bath has double living rm with 59' of windows, Central Park views, gourmet kitchen, library and MBR. WEB: 0019686. **$11,900,000**. E. Sample & B. Powers.
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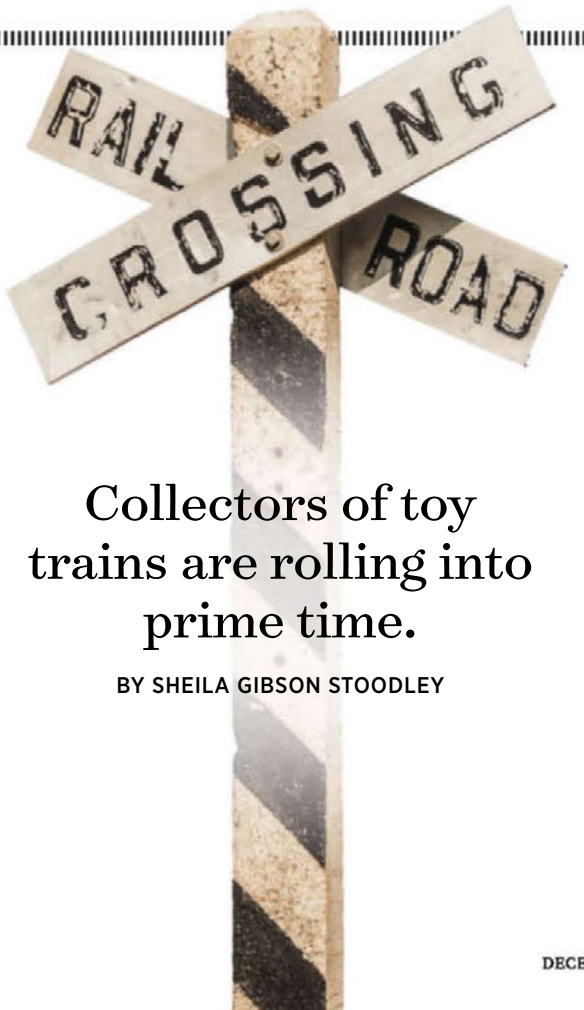
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THE DECEMBER EXPRESS









Collectors of toy trains are rolling into prime time.

BY SHEILA GIBSON STOODLEY

MARTIN FOLB was driving from Los Angeles to New York to attend a convention on cut glass, one of his collecting pursuits, when he decided to take a detour to see an antique toy train set that was destined for auction. Folb had been spellbound by trains as a child, acquiring his first Lionel set at age 7 and joining the Train Collectors Association at 10, but he drifted away from them when he went to college, as so many youthful collectors do. But on that cross-country road trip, going five miles out of his way to have a peek turned into four hours of studying and photographing the lot: a 1936 special-order train set by Lionel in near-mint condition with its original packaging.

"I made a determination that the only way I was not going to get this set was if Bill Gates was in the audience and he wanted it," Folb recalls.

On the big day of the auction, in fall 2006, Folb began bidding by phone from his home in Los Angeles, with Gary Zippie of Stout Auctions stationed on the other end of the line. Bids surged past the lot's $150,000 reserve and powered toward an East Coaster's pledge of $225,000, which the man had placed in the belief that the price was unlikely to fly higher than that. Now that man was desperately trying to get online to increase his bid—but he had not preregistered, which meant he could not commit to a sum that exceeded $15,000.

Zippie and Folb grasped the situation instantly: If Folb raised his bid to $230,000, the train was his. Folb sat and sweated. "Gary said, 'Take your time.' I thought about it for two minutes," Folb says, but the outcome was never truly in doubt. "I had seen it. I had fallen in love with it, and I decided I had to have it."

Folb got it, for a $230,000 hammer price that, with premium, totaled $253,000. And he has been generous with it, showing the set periodically at local train collectors' events. The 62-year-old research physicist now owns 40 to 50 other train sets, as well as several hundred accessories such as station houses, lampposts, and the like. While the quality of his collection sets him apart, his ardor does not. The Train Collectors Association, which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year, counts around 28,000 dues-paying members. And though the train set is no longer the must-have Christmas toy, December remains a fine time to seek one at auction. Noel Barrett's annual fall auction of antique toys, including several choice trains, is scheduled for December 5 and 6 in New Hope, Pa. Stout Auctions, located in Williamsport, Ind., will host a toy train sale on December 6. And Special Auction Services, based in Newbury, England, holds its annual Trains Galore sale on December 10 and 11.

Just as Folb had drifted away from trains as a college student, he found himself drifting back to them 10 to 12 years ago, as a grown man, for a grown-up reason. "When I was a little boy, every association I ever had with these trains was nothing but happy, positive memories," he says. "How many things in your life generate happy, positive memories?"

TOY TRAINS EMERGED in Europe in the 1860s, decades behind the appearance of their real-life counterparts, but the lag did not reflect any lack of desire from the children they would ultimately delight. The fundamental concept of "a toy"



Noel Barrett's December auction of antique toys includes this rare Märklin Stephenson's Rocket steam locomotive, circa 1904, that is valued at $30,000 to $40,000. Previous page, from top: An Empire State Express locomotive, a Shell oil car from Martin Folb's record-setting 1936 Lionel set, and an 1895 locomotive that was one of the first electric toy trains in the United States.

Limited Line
The train was dubbed the State Set because each passenger car is named for a U.S. state. The rarest is the Illinois car; Lionel dropped it after realizing the locomotives struggled to pull a foursome.

Window Seat
To differentiate 20th Century Limited state cars from other Lionel state cars, the 20th Century Limiteds were given ivory window inserts instead of green ones. While Illinois cars with green windows are rare, those with ivory windows are even scarcer.



Mothball Express
The locomotive's wheels are made of pot metal, a relatively fragile material that may have rendered the toy's front and back wheels faulty. That might have led the family to rebox the set and store it for decades.

First-Class Ticket: Deconstructing the Top Lot

THE AUCTION RECORD for a toy train is held by this 1936 special order from the American manufacturer Lionel, which collector Martin Folb purchased for $253,000 at a Stout Auctions sale in 2006. Antique toys that survive in such exquisite condition often have a sad story—perhaps a child rejected them on sight, or died before the gift-giving day arrived. But not this train. It was ordered by a wealthy businessman in Syracuse, N.Y., who had at least one young son and who may have had a sideline in toys, which would explain his ability to get a special train from Lionel. "There's nothing like this," says Greg Stout, the auctioneer and a toy train specialist. "This is it. The pinnacle." —S.G.S.



Boxed Cars
"The true rarity in the set is the outer box and its condition, and 90 percent of the rarity is in the box," Stout says. "If that train was total junk, but you had the box, it would still be worth the same amount. It's the only known example of that box."

"We call them children's toys, but a lot were bought by adults for children to watch them play with."

—NOEL BARRETT



was suspect in Victorian times, and toys were often only allowed in the context of education—mechanical banks to encourage thrift, or a new animal for a Noah's Ark menagerie as a Sunday school reward. But trains and other toys ultimately gained acceptance as playthings and became an established part of a middle-class childhood. Trains' appeal is obvious on one level: They moved under their own power, at a time when few other toys could. But they enchant in subtler ways, too. The need for space for their layouts constricted them to a Christmas-only treat in cramped 20th-century American homes (but not in Folb's, who kept a layout in his childhood bedroom on a 4-by-8-foot piece of plywood). Their expense, their complexity, and their dangers (19th-century steam-powered toy trains could explode just like the paddle steamboats of old, and early electric trains could deliver nasty shocks) made them a toy that kids enjoyed under the watch of an adult, and often, that meant playing with Dad—a novelty in its own right.

The steep retail prices—a standard three-car 20th Century Limited listed for $75 in 1935—and the need for supervision prompts the question of who these train sets were really for. "We call them children's toys, but a lot were bought by adults for children to watch them play with," says Noel Barrett, the auctioneer and toy expert. Recently, Bertoia Auctions

Three 1915 Märklin boxcars emblazoned with pre-Prohibition beer ads fetched high prices at Bertoia's 2013 auction. From top, Pabst sold for $28,320; Schlitz for $30,680, and Budweiser for $23,600.



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of Vineland, N.J., had a trio of magnificent antique boxcars made by Märklin, a venerated German toy maker, for the American toy market. All three touted brands of beer—Schlitz, Budweiser, and Pabst—faithfully replicating the period advertisements that appeared on the brewers' full-size boxcars. And all were produced around 1915, five years before Prohibition. Given how prominent women were in the temperance movement, it seems unlikely that the average American mother would let her impressionable little darlings play with toys emblazoned with ads for alcoholic beverages. "Those three are some of the best [of their type] I've ever seen," says Rich Bertoia, the auction coordinator at Bertoia. "I put them down as 'excellent,' which almost never happens." An excellent rating in the lot notes also adds credence to the notion that the boxcars probably never saw the inside of a nursery. In the 2013 sale, the Schlitz went for $30,680 against an estimate of $16,000 to 18,000; the Pabst for $28,320 against $12,000 to 15,000; and the Budweiser for $23,600 against $6,000 to $9,000.

Brewery boxcars aside, toy trains have long been a father-son bonding activity, and Russell McFall has a unique prize

In May, Bertoia sold Carlisle & Finch's No. 45 locomotive, tender, and passenger car (above) for $46,020 and a Carlisle & Finch boxed freight set (right) for $23,600.

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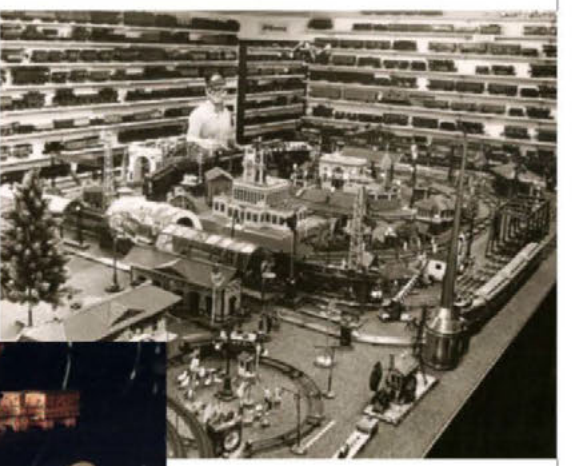
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Ward Kimball—the late, legendary collector and Disney animator—with the American portion of his collection (top right) and a full-size locomotive (right). Top left: A Voltamp 2-inch gauge Factory Special #1915 Edwin Jr. Interurban United electric trolley.

adding a scarce Carlisle & Finch piece of elevated, circular track that does not connect or interfere with the original route. Its delightfully complex, overlapping circuit, which takes two and a half minutes to complete, makes it especially entertaining to watch. "It's a unique layout for the period," McFall says. "Nothing else is as extensive as this."

WHILE GRANTING that it makes no sense to acquire the oldest known working toy train layout in America only to let it molder unused, McCall is an outlier among serious collectors. "Contemporary collectors, the people who pay the money, don't run the trains," Barrett says. Hugo Marsh of the British auction house Special Auction Services, who handled toy train sales at Christie's London for years, affirms the sentiment. "If it's a £10,000 locomotive," he says, "you have to be very brave to run it."

By that measure, McCall and Folb are brave men indeed. "I haven't run the 20th Century Limited yet," Folb says of his record-setting Lionel, "but I have run trains worth in excess of $100,000. I'm careful, but they're meant to be run." A former collector of classic cars, he was intrigued during a visit to the Nethercutt Museum in Sylmar, Calif., where all of the vehicles are maintained in drivable condition. "If the Nethercutt is willing to run a $200,000 Duesenberg, I'm willing to run a $200,000 train," Folb says.

Ward Kimball shared his view. The late animator, one of Disney's original Nine Old Men, unapologetically ran his extensive collection of toy trains, and his attitude did not affect their ultimate value. When Barrett auctioned off Kimball's trains in two sales in 2004 and 2005, they collectively fetched $5.1 million.

The risks Kimball—as well as Folb and McFall—courted are not just derailments, but the bangs, scuffs, chips, and micro-accidents that inevitably occur when a pristine toy is removed from its box. In the universe of antique toy trains, as well as antique toys in general, condition beats all and has for some time; a relatively common toy train that has never left its perfectly preserved box can command more than a breathtaking rarity whose packaging was sacrificed to the fireplace on a cold Christmas morning and whose marks and dings confirm that children, long since grown, once had fun with it.

Jump Starters

Driven by winner-take-all energy, these equines and their riders put on a mesmerizing performance. BY ANN HEROLD

JOS VERLOOY, who is 18, and Domino, who is 11, came of age together in Belgium, sharing a bond that allows them to communicate without speaking. The connection is apparent to those watching them here in Los Angeles, as Verlooy trots Domino, his show jumper, into an arena that is a labyrinth of 13 enormous obstacles, some taller than many people, others wider than most cars. The bay gelding pricks his ears as Verlooy steers him to a fence more than 5 feet high. The horse explodes into the air, tucking his front legs tightly against his chest and clearing with inches to spare. It is so quiet that the microphones pick up the creak of Verlooy's leather saddle, Domino's loud breathing as he gallops, the





Patrice Delaveau and Ornella Mail HDC clear an obstacle during the first Longines Masters in Los Angeles. Above: Jos Verlooy and Domino take a victory lap.

KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

Left: Jos Verlooy and Domino effortlessly clear another jump on their way to winning the Los Angeles Masters Grand Prix and $157,000 in prize money. Center: Darragh Kenny and Chin Quidam VDL compete in the trophy class. Bottom right: Competitors walk the course before the Grand Prix competition.



thuds as he lands. At jump No. 3, Domino faces a monstrous triple bar—as wide as an Escalade—arcing his neck and hanging in the air like Michael Jordan. Five jumps later he is at the "power line," a tricky set of obstacles that demands a horse to respond instantly to the rider's cues or crash. A couple of riders barely escape disaster.

Verlooy tugs on the reins. Domino pauses briefly to collect his 1,200 pounds of bone and muscle, coiling to spring. Everything about this ride has been so smooth—no irritated bucks, no tug-of-war for control—that even the waiters at the VIP seats stop to watch. The sold-out crowd senses this duo will deliver what they have been waiting for: a flawless round. But first the pair must master jump No. 10, a lightly balanced fence set distractingly close to the out gate. One horse after another peeks at the exit, loses concentration, and sends the top rail flying.

As the crowd holds its breath, Verlooy and Domino clear easily and are on to the triple combination. The three massive jumps are set one to two strides apart; imagine leaping your height from a standstill. Yet it is no problem for Domino, who heads to the last fence at a dead run. As he vaults No. 13, the crowd erupts. The teenaged Verlooy pumps his fist in the air. He has qualified for the all-important jump-off at the Longines Los Angeles Masters five-star Grand Prix—and a share of its $475,000 prize.

SHOW JUMPING is that rare sport in which men face off against women and teenagers are as common as middle-aged competitors. It takes place throughout the world, from its birthplace in Great Britain to obscure places like the tiny island of Grenada, which proudly issued a postage stamp in its honor. In Europe it is phenomenally popular, the No. 2 spectator sport behind soccer, with tens of thousands converging for revered competitions like the one in Aachen, Germany.

LEFT: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES; MIDDLE: ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT, ROW: JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES

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platform, the meeting point for horse lovers, neophytes, celebrities, VIPs, luxury brands, and corporations. And at the Los Angeles Convention Center we have the optimal logistics that we could not find in New York."

The Longines Los Angeles Masters took place in September, and long before the bluebloods arrived, show director Frank Lombaers was walking the Convention Center's cavernous spaces, pointing to where he would erect a Prestige Village around the horses' warm-up arena, a mix of luxury retail booths, gourmet food and wine bars, an art gallery, and a stage for local performers. "People can fetch a glass of Champagne, some caviar, and watch the horses warm up," he said. "I want to create a proximity to the athletes, so that the spectators can be a part of it, smell it, chat with the champions."

ON A LATE September morning a few weeks later, a jet carrying 51 elite European horses taxis to a stop at Los Angeles International Airport. Once at the downtown Convention Center, the visiting athletes settle into their stalls for a three-day quarantine before more than 200 other jumpers arrive. Grand Prix jumpers are the world's costliest horseflesh. Owners pay hundreds of thousands for raw talent and millions for proven champions. These jumpers take years of expensive training to develop, prohibited by international rules to compete before the age of 7 and rarely hitting their stride before age 9.

For four days the action at the Convention Center is nonstop as junior, amateur, and professional riders vie for prize money totaling $1 million. The biggest draw is the final day's five-star Grand Prix. The list of its 41 competitors reads like a show jumping who's who: 28-year-old Scott Brash of Great Britain, No. 1









Clockwise from bottom right: Georgina Bloomberg, Jos Verlooy, and Steve Guerdat finish top three in the Grand Prix; the winner's podium, with Verlooy first, Guerdat second, and Bloomberg third; Bloomberg's gray mare Juvina sports her third-place ribbon; the Los Angeles Convention Center was transformed for the event.

TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES; TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: DAVID BUCHAN/GETTY IMAGES

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in attendance. As the first rider enters the arena, all eyes move to the ring. The tough course design by Luc Musette takes its toll. Decorated American Reed Kessler has a shocking double refusal. Springsteen's Vindicat W takes down a rail.

Right: Jessica Springsteen rides Vindicat W in the competition. Below: Georgina Bloomberg and Juvina on their way to a third-place finish.

Verlooy's error-free ride that afternoon is one of six. A crew scurries into the ring to reduce the number of jumps to seven for the jump-o□. As Verlooy and Domino rocket flawlessly over the smaller course, chef Mattagne, a fellow Belgian, cheers. The pair's time of 38.11 proves unbeatable, and Verlooy is $157,000 richer.

Later, in the press area, a beaming Bloomberg gives credit for her third-place finish to a strategy she learned from her dad. "My horse isn't naturally fast, so I wanted to focus on going double clear," she explains. "Or as my father would say, 'Just don't screw it up.

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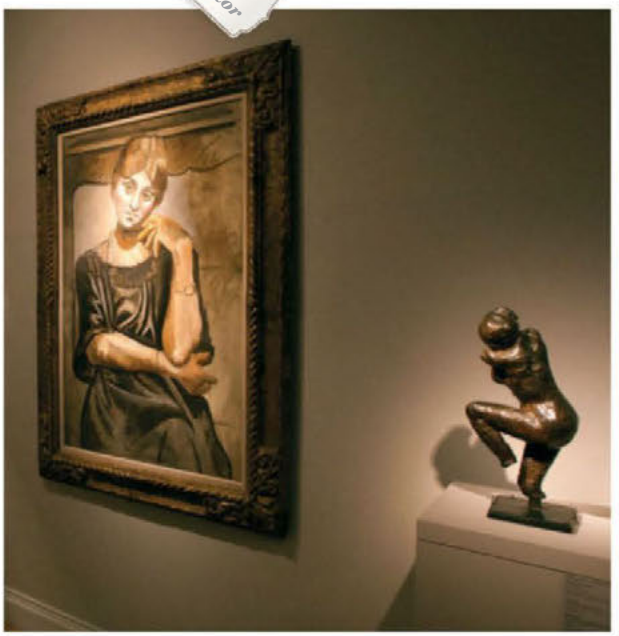
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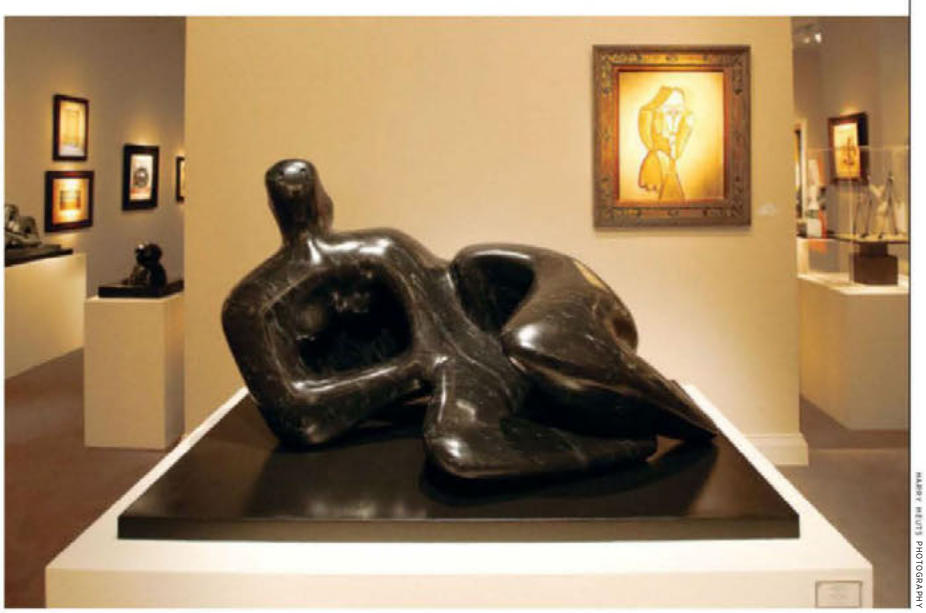


Fine Arts Major

Attending the European Fine Art Fair—the world's leading art festival—is a memorable adventure for any art collector. Now Protours is collaborating with TEFAF board member Michel Witmer to make it a more exclusive experience. The weeklong itinerary, March 9 to 15, includes a private behind-the-scenes tour of the fair in Maastricht, the Netherlands, with Witmer as a guide to its nearly 300 galleries from 20 countries; access to TEFAF's invitation-only gala opening; and accommodations at the 18th-century Belgian château Landgoed Altembrouck. Beyond the fair, Witmer will lead the group of 12 to 20 people through several rural châteaux in Belgium, including a Louis XVI neoclassical estate, to see private living spaces and collections rarely available for public viewing. First, however, the trip touches down in Amsterdam, with a stay at the city's Hotel de l'Europe, for what Witmer is calling "the best exhibit to ever take place in our lifetime"—the Rijksmuseum's *Late Rembrandt* retrospective—with one of the exhibit's head curators leading the tour. "It is hard to get Rembrandts out of museums and private collections," Witmer says. "The exhibit is so important. I needed to do this."

Guests also can also extend the trip and head with Witmer to his native France for a private tour of the Louvre and a multicourse dinner in the Louis Vuitton factory's private art nouveau dining room. "We do exclusive trips every year, but never one with so many private collections," Witmer says. The TEFAF and Amsterdam trip starts at $5,900 per person for double occupancy. –AMANDA MILLIN

protours.nl, 347.748.1817



MARY PRATT PHOTOGRAPHY

Artwork at past TEFAF Maastrich fairs included, clockwise from top left, ***Portrait d'Olga Khokhlova***, by Pablo Picasso (1917), ***La Mariée*** by Eva Gonzalès (1847–1883), and ***Reclining Figure; Curved*** by Henry Moore (1977).


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Cigarette Boat (shown), which has a cap à la James Bond, to reveal a platinum nib.

Priced from $10,000, each of the seven designs is limited to 66 numbered pieces as either fountain pens or roller balls. The series is revving up for introduction

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—RICHARD CARLETON HACKER

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Vintage Viewing

Visitors to Tuscany who appreciate the Italian region's exceptional wines are likely to find their way to the Via Bolgherese, a cypress-lined lane that meanders through the hills near the medieval village of Bolgheri. Here, near the coast, the sea breezes temper the climate, and marine, volcanic, and alluvial soils combine to produce the terroir that nurtures the grapes on the Ornellaia estate. In turn, the winery takes those hand-harvested Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot grapes and transforms them into its acclaimed Super Tuscan wines.

While the estate is open to visitors daily, it offers its private Vendemmia d'Artista tour just 10 times a year, to groups of four or fewer. The tour spotlights the winery's



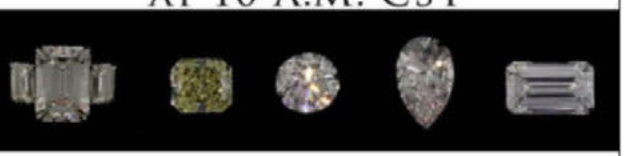
Vendemmia d'Artista program, in which a renowned artist is invited to interpret each vintage's individuality. For the latest release, the Canadian artist Rodney Graham combined poetry with graphics for wine labels that commemorate the 2011 vintage, called L'Infinito (Infinity); he also composed an upside-down photograph of a century-old oak tree on the estate (shown). The climax of the tour to explore the program's artworks is a rare opportunity: a vertical tasting of six vintages of Ornellaia's flagship Super Tuscan from 2006 through 2011. Reservations are required and can be made at the website or via e-mail. The tour is about $500 per person, the equivalent of about two bottles of the 2011 vintage. –KAREN CAKEBREAD

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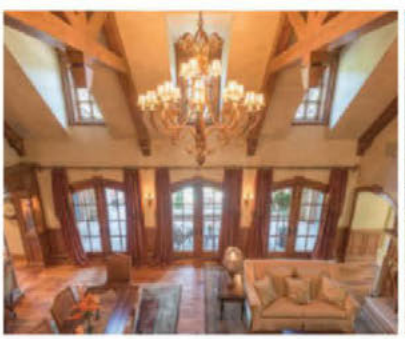


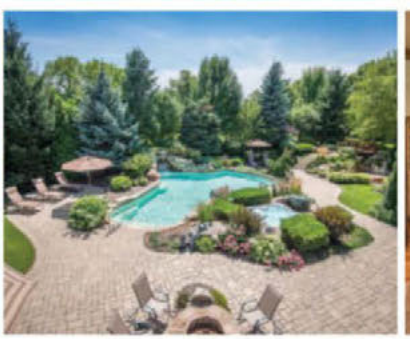
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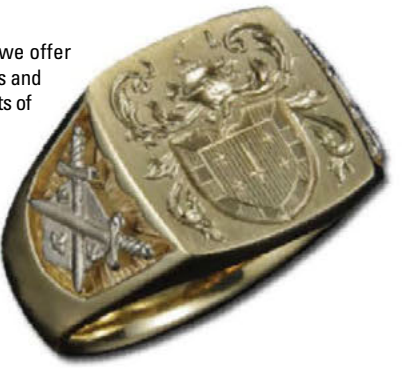
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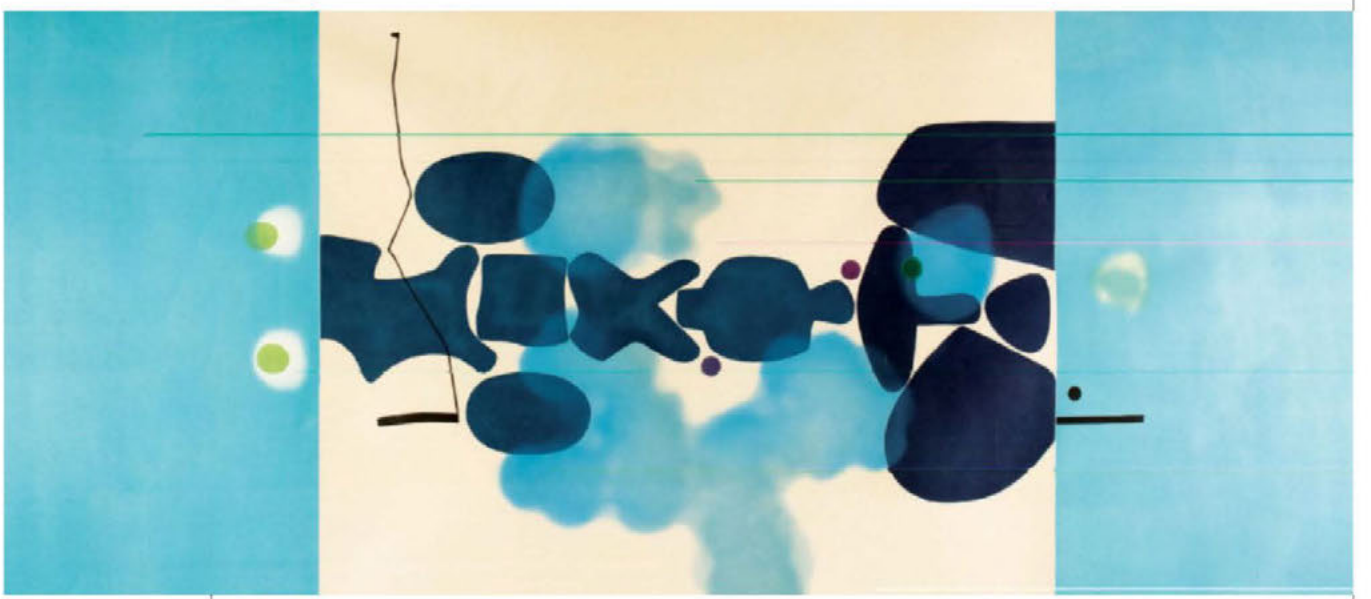


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Big Picture

GERRY MCGOVERN, the design director of Land Rover, first saw *Pulse* on his computer screen. The Victor Pasmore print was so affecting, he could hardly take his eyes off it. For two years, "I would just look at it," he recalls. "Only a few were produced and they're quite sought after. But I kept looking at the picture of it, and kept seeing things in it, and I thought, *I've got to have this*."

McGovern is drawn to modern art and midcentury design (he has brought a distinctly modernist touch to the Rover, particularly with the Evoque). His collection includes Sam Francis, Patrick Caulfield, and Patrick Harris. But Pasmore holds a special fascination. A darling of the Royal Academy and an accomplished representational painter, Pasmore turned his back on realism in the late 1940s to become an abstract artist. "He used to close his eyes and try to re-create the shapes he saw," McGovern says. Pasmore, who died in 1998, likened his artwork to music, and his pieces are included in the collections of Tate Britain, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and, as of six months ago, Gerry McGovern, who did indeed get his *Pulse*.

The substantial piece—about 8.5 feet long and nearly 3.5 feet high—is an etching and aquatint Pasmore made in 1985 and printed in collaboration with the great Italian printmaker Valter Rossi at 2RC Stamperia d'Arte in Rome. Its amorphous blue forms now float along a hallway in McGovern's London apartment, where he hung it across from a mirror of the exact same dimensions. "When I'm leaving my bedroom I see it straightaway," McGovern says. "It's pretty much the first thing I see in the morning."

Why does he have such an emotional reaction to it? McGovern cannot say. "But I do know," he says, "that this picture makes my life better." —MICHALENE BUSICO

"When I'm leaving my bedroom I see it straightaway," McGovern says. "It's pretty much the first thing I see in the morning."

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